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MM Docket 92-263

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4103

July 29, 1993

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

The Honorable James H. Quello
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

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JULY 19 1993

Dear Chairman Quello:

Out of concern about the impact that the new cable regulations will have on small cable operators, I urge you to give utmost consideration to appropriate means by which unnecessary burdens on small operators might be relieved. I have appreciated your attention to the concerns of small operators during the ongoing process of issuing and implementing the regulations mandated by the 1992 Cable Bill, and I encourage you to take all necessary actions to ensure that small cable operators are treated fairly throughout this process.

First, I urge you to consider the impact on small cable operators of certain customer service standards, such as the local office requirement and the four-hour window for installation appointments. Many of these regulations present a special burden for small systems, especially those in rural areas. In many cases, fulfillment of these requirements would necessitate the hiring of additional staff. This cost could foreseeably be passed on to the consumer, thus working against the goal of maintaining low cable rates.

Second, I urge you to give special consideration during reconsideration and implementation of rate regulations to problems specific to small operators. As you know, small operators face unique pressures in the marketplace, such as lack of capital and limited revenue opportunities. It is my hope that the new rate regulations will be sensitive to the needs of small operators, and will allow an appropriate degree of flexibility in their implementation.

Finally, I would support a comprehensive examination of the impact of the new regulations on small cable operators. Such a study should assess the impact of current regulations, as well as the need for appropriate exemptions to ensure that the new regulations work to the greatest advantage of the consumer.

As you know, most of South Dakota is served by small cable companies. Federal cable regulations should be flexible enough to accommodate the inherent constraints and special needs of small cable companies, so that the tradition of their valuable service to rural America can be continued. I appreciate your efforts in this regard.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Tom Daschle
United States Senate

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